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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/760,341	01/10/2001	Robert M. Gruber	82552	2235

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EXAMINER

WOO, RICHARD SUKYOON

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3629

DATE MAILED: 06/16/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/760,341

Applicant(s)

GRUBER, ROBERT M.

Examiner

Richard Woo

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

- 1) The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

- 2) Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In Claim 1, line 10; and Claim 8, line 10, respectively, the recitation of "said purchase order" lacks antecedent basis.

In Claim 6, lines 4-5, the recitation of "said stock database" lacks antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

- 3) The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

- 4) Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Quelene (US 6,453,306).

As for Claim 1, Quelene discloses a system comprising:

means used by a requester to create a purchase document (see Fig. 2A and the description thereof);

first notifying means for notifying a processor of the document, wherein the processor reviews the document for completeness and accuracy and upon finding, the processor forwards the document to the approval chain (see Figs. 2A-2C and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3);

means for determining the approval chain for the document (see Id.);

means for sending the document through the chain, wherein each of the signatories approves the document by affixing an electronic signature to the document before the document is forwarded to a next signatory in the chain for approval (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3); and

second notifying means for notifying the processor of approval of the purchase document by the chain, wherein the processor is notified after a final signatory in the approval chain approves the document (see Id.).

However, Quelene does not expressly disclose the invention including:

means for printing an approval form, wherein the form contains information relevant to the document and the signature of each of the signatories in the chain.

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of Quelene to include means for

printing the appropriate form at any level (requester, processor, etc.,) for the purpose of printing any document relevant to the transaction and maintaining the hardcopy of the necessary document as backup files in case of database failure.

As for Claim 2, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system including means for rejecting the purchase document by any one of the signatories, wherein the processor and the requester are notified of the rejection (see Figs. 2B-2C);

As for Claim 3, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system including means for accessing all purchase orders awaiting approval by each of signatories (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3);

As for Claim 4, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system including means for illustrating the approval chain, wherein an indicator is provided as each of the signatories approves the purchase document (see Id.);

As for Claim 5, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system including means for notifying the requester of a need to amend the order (see Supra Figs. and Columns);

As for Claim 6, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system including means for completing the document, wherein the system searches a database of existing purchase documents after the requester inputs a new part number which corresponds to an existing part number in the database (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3); and

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As for Claim 7, the modified system of Quelene further discloses the system, wherein the first and second notifying means is by an e-mail (see *Id.*).

As for Claim 8, Quelene discloses a method comprising the steps of (generally see Figs. 2A-2C):

creating a purchase document by a requester;

notifying a processor of the document, wherein the processor reviews the document for completeness and accuracy and upon finding, the processor forwards the document to the approval chain (see *Supra* Figs.);

determining the approval chain for the document;

sending the document through the chain, wherein each of the signatories approves the document by affixing an electronic signature to the document before the document is forwarded to a next signatory in the chain for approval; and

notifying means for notifying the processor of approval of the purchase document by the chain, wherein the processor is notified after a final signatory in the approval chain approves the document (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3).

However, Quelene does not expressly disclose the method including:

printing an approval form, wherein the form contains information relevant to the document and the signature of each of the signatories in the chain.

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of Quelene to print the appropriate form at any level (requester, processor, etc.) for the purpose of printing any document relevant to the transaction and maintaining the hardcopy of the necessary document as backup files in case of database failure.

As for Claim 9, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method including rejecting the purchase document by any one of the signatories, wherein the processor and the requester are notified of the rejection (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3);

As for Claim 10, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method including accessing all purchase orders awaiting approval by each of signatories (see Id.);

As for Claim 11, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method including illustrating the approval chain, wherein an indicator is provided as each of the signatories approves the purchase document (see Id.);

As for Claim 12, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method including notifying the requester of a need to amend the order (see Figs. and col. 2, line 65 – col. 3, line 57; col. 8, line 49 – col. 12, line 44; col. 15, line 17 – col. 16, line 3);

As for Claim 13, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method including completing the document, wherein the system searches a database of existing purchase documents after the requester inputs a new part number which corresponds to an existing part number in the database (see Id.); and

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As for Claim 14, the modified method of Quelene further discloses the method, wherein notifying is by an e-mail (see Supra Columns).

Conclusion

5) The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

US 2001/0051902 is cited to show a method for increasing the security of online transactions, including the steps of a customer accessing a merchant server and selecting desired goods and services and placing an order.

JP 2002-157539 is cited to show a system for online transactions, deciding acceptance/rejection of purchase order using extracted information from e-mail based on which account settlement is carried out.

US 2002/0188524 is cited to show a method of an order-maker placing an order and an order-receiver receiving the order, having an e-mail available. The invention relates to placing and confirming orders for various office supplies by e-mail and promptly delivering the order goods to an requester.

WO 00/57318 is cited to show a method and system for applying a set of business signing rules for processing of electronic documents. The method includes the steps of verifying the identity of an authorized user using a predefined verification protocol, determining a set of privileges associated with the user, filling-in an electronic document in accordance with the privileges and based on inputs provided by the user, attaching a digital signature to the document.

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WP 0387462 is cited to show a system including e-mail facilities made available to attached users, means are provided to enable users using any terminal to select a form among pre-stored document forms, fill the form in and then have the form mailed for approval by system users selected based on predefined and stored rules.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Richard Woo whose telephone number is 703-308-7830. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 AM -5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss can be reached on 703-308-2702. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9306 for regular communications and for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0861.



Richard Woo
Patent Examiner
GAU 3629
June 14, 2004

JOHN G. WEISS
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